

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Greetings from Reformation Lutheran Church!

“ After some very exciting changes recently in our church, we have moved to a new location just a few miles down the road. We are now located in the Cataula Center, at 1045 Martha Berry Highway; Cataula, GA; 31804.

We are also very pleased to be welcoming Pastor Roderick Stephenson as our full-time pastor, starting on May 13th, 2012.”

The above news was recently posted on our church website. Two years ago, we could only pray and dream that such events would ever take place.

The beginnings of our church started, as did many others in the LCMC. In 2010, the church that many of us attended, voted to stay with the ELCA. For some of us, staying was not an option. A small group of about twenty-five met one evening at a local steakhouse. Emotions ran the gamut from sorrow, anxiousness, and excitement over new prospects and of course, uncertainty.

A second meeting was planned at another restaurant. There was so much that needed to be discussed and so many plans to be made. It was almost overwhelming! We knew that we could not continue meeting in restaurants, so finding a worship space was our first priority.

As God works miracles, one of our members happened upon a Baptist church with a declining, elderly membership. They had an average of ten members per service and were willing to rent worship space to us. Our first service there was in February of 2010. It worked out perfectly! We did some repairs on the property, much to the delight of our new Baptist friends. We had Sunday School, fellowship dinners and even had VBS that first summer! Our average attendance was around twenty-five. Different members of our congregation stepped up to lead worship and deliver sermons.

Also during this time, we voted on our new church name - **Reformation Lutheran Church**. After much research, we also agreed to affiliate with the LCMC. It seemed to be the best fit for our needs and the doctrines fell in line with what we wanted our church to be. Our constitution and bylaws were written and approved, council members elected and in general, a full-fledged church was formed!

We placed an ad for an interim pastor on the LCMC website and in December of 2010, we were very blessed to have Pastor James Harrington start a four month term with us as an interim pastor. Under his guidance, we began to better understand the LCMC in regards to how it operates using the Bible as its core of values and beliefs and mainly, how we, as the congregation, could decide for ourselves how we chose to do things! He was a very steady and encouraging influence for us after our anxious beginnings. Pastor Harrington led us through a wonderful Christmas season (complete with a Christmas tree made by some of our members!) and into a joyous Easter celebration. Before his final Sunday with us, we commissioned three lay-leaders to lead worship services.

With the departure of Pastor Harrington, we stepped up our search for a pastor once more. Again, the LCMC website was most helpful. We got resumes from several prospective candidates. In the fall of 2011, we narrowed down the list to two that we were most interested in and invited them to come lead worship at different times. We were pleased with both candidates, although one in particular stood out. We had much to discuss in council about what we expected from a pastor and, what our small group could offer.

During this time, we hit a bump in the road in September of 2011. The Baptist church we were renting space from began to grow. They began to use the facilities more and it became harder for us to meet and do things as we had gotten so used to doing. While we were very pleased for them, it made things

uncomfortable for us. As things go, they asked that we start finding another worship space. Per our rental contract with them, we had a year to move. So, the search was on.

We invited our preferred pastoral candidate back to lead worship twice more. A call committee was elected to properly go through the call process with a formal interview and later, a congregational vote. On Easter Sunday, the congregation voted unanimously to call Pastor Rod Stephenson as our full time pastor!

Added to the blessing of a pastor, we also found a new place to call our church home! We rented two store front units in a shopping center. One unit is our sanctuary and the other, our fellowship hall. We are pleased to have a landlord that has been very generous to us with our rent, the repairs he was willing to do and things he was willing to pay for and allow us to do. Everyone in our congregation pitched in to make our new home a wonderful worship space. So many things were donated by members - banners, offering plates, candles, altar cloths - not to mention the time and talents so many of our members willingly gave to paint, clean, do electrical work etc. There's more to do to complete the fellowship hall, but we are more than pleased with our progress. We are still averaging around twenty-five per Sunday, but we really feel hopeful and encouraged as we get our name out in the area.

And that, fellow saints, brings us to where we are now. We met for the first time in our new place on May 6th and Pastor Rod started full time on the 13th. God has been so good to us! If we can share even a portion of His blessings throughout our community, it will be work beyond measure.

"We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks! For Your wondrous works declare that Your name is near...." Psalm 75:1

God's Blessings to you all,
the members of Reformation Lutheran Church

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